

SAINT LOUIS BIRD CLUB BULLETIN

Official Organ of the Saint Louis Bird Club
for the Protection of
Bird Enjoyment, Bird Study, and Bird Conservation

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Number 7

THE OCTOBER MEETING

The October meeting of the Saint Louis Bird Club will be held in room 320 of Soldan High School at 918 North Union. Our usual place of meeting at the Cabany Branch Library had been previously engaged and we were unable to obtain it.

As usual we will meet on the third Wednesday of the month, the seventeenth.

Since this is the first meeting of a new fall season, we hope to see an especially large number in attendance. Bring your friends.

Undoubtedly many of us have had very interesting experiences with birds during the past summer. While the intense heat and severe drought of the past summer have undoubtedly contributed to a serious decrease in bird population of the Saint Louis region of the Mississippi River valley, especially of the shore birds and water birds which usually are to be found, nevertheless many of us must have notes on the hardier species which were forced by food supply or other factors to remain in the area.

At our next meeting we would like to hear of these interesting experiences with birds we all have had during the summer. Please come prepared to tell each other what you have seen. Interesting visitants at feeding trays, unusual happenings at the bird bath (which were more numerous than usual this summer owing to the drought), rare sights of the peculiar antics of nesting birds, chance observations of migratory birds, in short, anything about
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A BIRDING TOUR TO CALIFORNIA

Cross-country birding in an automobile necessarily will be rewarded only by the more conspicuous birds and birds which are found in unsheltered spots along the roadside. On our trip to California, the last of July, no attempt was made at birding except from the car.

During the first day, between Saint Louis and Oklahoma City, only the usual birds common to Saint Louis were to be seen. But the second morning, west of Oklahoma City, on the edge of a large lake and marsh, we found Louisiana, Little Blue, Green, and Great Blue Herons, Yellow-crowned Night Herons, several American Egrets, and a large number of terns of various species, among which were distinguished the Common, Least, Black, and probably the Arctic (?) Terns. Also there were Yellow-headed Blackbirds and some of the commoner shore-birds. Undoubtedly the area would have revealed many more interesting things had we left the car.

Soon after that we met with the first Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, which were abundant as soon as they appeared. Before nightfall, when we were nearing the New Mexico line, they disappeared almost as suddenly as they had appeared.

The rest of the trip was practically all through arid semi-desert. Typical roadside birds of this region are: American Raven, Western Red-tailed Hawk, Ferruginous Rough-legged Hawk, Desert Sparrow Hawk, Burrowing Owl, Western Mockingbird, Sage Thrasher, Road-runner, Cassin and
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INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT
INTERESTING BIRDS

The Osprey has perhaps the best equipped feet of any member of the bird kingdom with rough spiny projections and long curved claws for grasping its fishy prey. Yet it is of such a harmless nature that Grackles have been observed to nest among the branches of its large nest.

The Horned Owl of North America has been divided by classification experts into eight separate subspecies.

The Kingfisher has received its specific scientific name from mythology. Alcyone, the daughter of Aeolus, so grieved for her shipwrecked husband that she threw herself into the sea and was changed into a Kingfisher.

The Cormorants can dive to great depths and have been caught in fish nets one hundred and twenty feet below the surface of the water.

The Yellow-bellied Sapsucker's presence in an area can always be
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The summer vacation has passed and I hope it has been a fruitful one to those who are interested in birds and bird activity. The fall season is now upon us with the number of summer birds rapidly decreasing but with a gradual increase in the winter visitors. This is the beginning of the season wherein one might find those rare winter visitors about which one often reads or hears exciting experiences.

The next two months will bring many water-fowl and a few birds of prey which can be seen at no other period of the year. We bird enthusiasts should take advantage of our opportunities and attempt to learn more about these visitors.

Our next meeting will be the first one of a new series and if we are to work together with greater harmony we should know more about each other's experiences, so come prepared to tell us your summer experiences and do not hesitate to speak out. Dr. D. M. Hetler

THE CHRISTMAS CENSUS

It is not too early to call attention to the bird census of the Saint Louis region which will be held during the coming Christmas holidays in conjunction with the Audubon Society. The exact date as well as the localities to be covered will be announced in a later issue of the Bulletin.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE
WOOD IBIS

The Wood Ibis which had been becoming increasingly rare in past years is staging a comeback together with the Egrets and Herons protected by the efforts of the Audubon Association. As you know, the Audubon Association maintains thirty-two sanctuaries comprising
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THE OCTOBER MEETING

(continued)

birds will be suitable material. If any of you have been so fortunate as to vacation elsewhere, we would like to hear of your experiences with birds at other places than Saint Louis.

Don't forget that your experiences are as interesting to your friends as they are to yourself. And, in addition, they may, in view of the peculiar weather conditions of the past summer, have an undisputed scientific value.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE
WOOD IBIS

(continued)

one hundred and thirty different areas and employs during the breeding season of the birds as many as thirty-three wardens. These efforts in recent years have contributed to the increase of apparently doomed species. American Egrets and Little Blue Herons are now common here during their summer wanderings. Although specimens of the Wood Ibis have been recorded here and there intermittently, we believe the following is the first record of so large a group in the Saint Louis region in recent years. The birds do range irregularly to Indiana and Wisconsin.

Foster and Zahm observed the gull-like flight of about one hundred and fifty of these large birds over Saint Louis on August 24. Their characteristic soaring flight and peculiar downward slant of the bill while flying plus the white plumage sharply defined from the glossy black primaries and tail, are unmistakable. On the same day a flock of forty-four Wood Ibis was observed opposite Cape Girardeau feeding in company with twenty-four American Egrets, thirty-six Little Blue Herons, five Green Herons, and four Great Blue Herons. Inasmuch as the Wood Ibis is

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EXCHANGES

IOWA BIRD LIFE (September) in an interesting tabulation of records concerning the Starling by Philip A. Du Mont, shows the startling progress the bird has made in the state of Iowa since the last census was taken in September 1933. Only nine of the ninety-nine counties of the state are without reports. Data on migrant birds at Emmetsburg, Iowa, gathered by Le Roy Titus Weeks is also given. Swainson's Hawk and Burrowing Owl are reported as breeding in Emmet County.

Webster Groves NATURE NOTES (July) announce that Mr. S.P. Jones has been elected Vice President of the Audubon Society of Mo. We join with the W.G.N.S.S. in congratulating Mr. Jones on this distinction. Nature Notes (August) contains a review of Chapman's book, "Autobiography of a Bird Lover." We would recommend this book to all nature lovers wishing to become acquainted with the effects of temperature and elevation on bird life.

THE RAVEN, bulletin of the Virginia Society of Ornithology lists additions to the Virginia Avifauna and contains general field notes of the region.

WOOD IBIS OBSERVATIONS
(continued)

classed as a regular summer visitor in the Peninsula of Missouri this observation is relatively unimportant. However, it does bear out the unmistakable fact that these large wading birds are definitely on the increase and if vigilance is not relaxed will become a permanent part of the American landscape - a place which, by reason of their aesthetic appeal, they deserve.

The Wood Ibis is one of two species of Storks found in North America. The Jabiru of tropical America wanders north to Texas. Only the Wood Ibis is common in the United States.

FIRST REGIONAL FIELD MEET
MISSOURI AUDUBON SOCIETY
ST. LOUIS BIRD CLUB UNIT

The Saint Louis Bird Club in cooperation with the Missouri Audubon Society conducted its first fall regional field meet at Creve Coeur, September 29th and 30th. The meet was disappointing both with respect to the number in attendance and the poor weather on both days. However, considering the lateness of the date a fair number of birds was observed to be in the locality.

Birds common to both dates were: E. Green Heron, N. Red-shouldered Hawk, E. Sparrow Hawk, M. Mourning Dove, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Chimney Swift, N. Flicker, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Phoebe, Blue Jay, E. Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, W. House Wren, Carolina Wren, Brown Thrasher, E. Robin, E. Bluebird, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Tennessee Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Parula Warbler, Myrtle Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, English Sparrow, E. Meadowlark, Red-winged Blackbird, Bronzed Grackle, Cardinal, E. Goldfinch, E. Field Sparrow, M. Song Sparrow, making a total of thirty-seven species seen on both days.

Birds observed Saturday, but either absent or unnoticed in the region Sunday were: Pied-billed Grebe, Wood Pewee, Tree Swallow, Rough-winged Swallow, N. Cliff Swallow, Catbird, Wood Thrush, White-eyed Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, N. Yellow-Throat, American Redstart, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Towhee, making a grand total of fifty-one for Saturday.

Birds observed Sunday were Double-crested Gormorant, Blue-winged Teal, Wood Duck, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Marsh Hawk, Osprey, Bob-white, American Coot, Spotted
(continued next column)

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Plans for the regional bird walk to be made on Sept. 29th and 30th as part of the State Audubon Society's bird count were discussed. It was decided to have individuals and groups cover the Creve Coeur and Forest Park regions in particular. The reports are to be sent to Dr. Hetler to be compiled and forwarded to Dr. Bennitt of Columbia.

The State Academy of Science meeting of November 1934 (which includes a session of the Audubon Society of Missouri) and the AAA meeting at St. Louis in December, 1935 were tentatively announced.

NEW BIRD CLUB MEMBERS

The Bird Club has added to its roster the names of several new members and of former members who have joined again.

Mrs. C. Leslie, Ponca Trail, Osage Hills

Arthur H. Foote, 3548 Sidney Street

William Jenner, Fayette, Mo.
Mr. and Mrs. F. R. von Wind-egger, "Sweetbriar," Clayton, Mo.

We cordially welcome them to the Bird Club.

FIRST REGIONAL FIELD MEET
(continued)

Sandpiper, Kingfisher, Cedar Waxwing, Black and White Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, for a grand total of fifty-two for Sunday.

The total number of Species seen on both days was sixty-eight.

Outstanding on Saturday's list was the large number of Swallows present, mostly rough-wings, which were absolutely not in evidence on Sunday.

Outstanding on Sunday's list was the flight of Hawks which began very early in the morning
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A BIRDING TOUR TO CALIFORNIA (continued)

Arkansas Kingbirds, Desert Horned Lark, Scaled Quail, Prairie Sharp-tailed Grouse, Prairie Falcon, Turkey Vulture, and Golden Eagle.

In the dwarf evergreen and Pinon pine country of Arizona the Pinon Jay, the Clarke's Nutcracker, the Mountain Bluebird (said to be the most beautiful of all western birds), the Lazuli Bunting, the Long-crested Jay, Rufous Hummingbird, and Lewis Woodpecker were the most conspicuous birds.

At the Grand Canyon, as seen from the rim, the outstanding birds were the White-throated Swifts and Violet-green Swallows which soar about the dizzying cliffs at terrific speed. Along the rim were many Steller's Jays and Rock Wrens, and the telescope picked out a pair of Golden Eagles circling over a distant cliff.

In western Arizona the Brewer's Blackbirds began to appear, the western counterpart of our Bronzed Grackle.

Nothing else of interest was noted until we reached the Pacific coast.

A typical morning's list of the birds in a damp slough in the coastal belt of Southern California is the following: Phainopepla (abundant), Black-chinned Hummingbird, Northern Violet-green Swallow, San Diego Song Sparrow, San Diego Wren, Tule Yellowthroat, Green-backed Goldfinch (abundant), Mourning Dove, Western Belted Kingfisher, House Finch (abundant), California Yellow Warbler, Red-shafted Flicker, Anthony's Green Heron, Black Phoebe (common), Killdeer, Long-tailed Chat, and Western Mockingbird. On one particular morning I had the good fortune to flush a Barn Owl and a Dusky Poorwill from a patch of trees in the slough.

Another day I had the thrill of watching a flock of sixty-five Wood Ibis flap overhead at March
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Field near Riverside. Because of the absolute perfection of the formation, the flight interested the army flyers with whom I was in the swimming pool at the time.

Any day in late summer I was able to find the following interesting species in the tidal marshes back of the beach in the vicinity of Santa Monica: American Egret, California Heron, Anthony's Green Heron, Black-crowned Night Heron, Western Cull, California Gull, Pied-billed Grebe, American Coot, Western belted Kingfisher, San Diego Song Sparrow, Belding's Marsh Sparrow, California Shrike, Western Lark Sparrow, Black Phoebe, Marsh Hawk, Desert Sparrow Hawk, San Diego Red-wing, California Towhee (one of the commonest birds in the region), Northern Phalarope, Brandt Cormorant, Farallone Cormorant, Mallard, Tri-colored Red-wing, Killdeer, and Western Grouse.

Along the beach were these in addition to the preceding: Marbled Godwit, Long-billed Dowitcher, Long-billed Curlew, Hudsonian Curlew, Snowy Plover, Western Willet, Surf Scoter, Forster's Tern, Least Tern, American Osprey, and California Brown Pelican.

In San Francisco Bay the White-winged Scoter, Common Loon, and California Murre were added to the list.

On the return trip in late September via Salt Lake, the northern route, there were two places of particular interest. The first was a mud pond in Colorado. There was a flock of several hundred Avocets, all standing on the unprotected edge of the pond with their heads tucked under their wings. There were a few sentinels and evidently they were resting between nocturnal migration flights. Near them on the muddy shore of the pond were a pair of Ring-necked Pheasants, and a number of Wilson Phalaropes were swimming with bobbing heads on the pond. Also there were a few Blue-winged Teal on the pond. Even that far west the Avocet is an unusual
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A BIRDING TOUR TO CALIFORNIA (continued)

sight.

The other noteworthy experience was the meeting with large numbers of Franklin's and Laughing Gulls over every alfalfa field in eastern Colorado and western Kansas. These two varieties of black-headed gulls were both in winter plumage, and were nowhere near water. Evidently they also were in migration.

Upon arriving home we had the pleasure of discovering we had piled up a list of over 150 species during the trip, without a great deal of trouble. No more than anyone else so inclined could do. Tom Kirksey, Editor
Observation Dept.,
St. Louis Bird Club.

FIELD OBSERVATIONS (Address
communications to Tom Kirksey,
33 Arundel Place, St. Louis.

Miss Marjorie Harrowell and Miss Alice Beaman report the following from Creve Coeur Lake on May 6, 1934: "We had the fine experience of finding another Blue-gray Gnatcatcher's nest. This one was almost finished. Both parents were putting finishing touches on the outside. About 50 feet up, near the lake shore, at the swamp on the left hand path the nest was located. A family of three young and two adult Carolina Wrens were in the brush along the road. A Wood Thrush had evidently been the victim of some disaster, the skull was broken open but nothing else was disturbed.

FIRST REGIONAL FIELD MEET (continued)

and continued with lesser frequency throughout the day. In all about twenty-five hawks, comprising six species, were counted which soared by singly, or in groups of two and three.

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FIRST REGIONAL FIELD MEET (continued)

Besides the Blue-winged Teal, the migratory ducks have apparently not entered the region as yet, although Mallards were reported in other localities than Creve Coeur on the thirtieth.

Warblers which were quite abundant two weeks ago are represented only by scattered individuals following the main body which has moved south.

INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT BIRDS (continued)

detected by the row of horizontal holes which it bores in trees, allowing the sap to exude and attract insects which are then greedily devoured with the sap.

The Horned Lark Nests very early, the first eggs being often laid before the snow is off the ground, and as many as three broods are raised in a year.

The Labrador Duck, now extinct, is remarkable for the fact that, as nearly as can be determined, there are only forty-two specimens in existence and not a single egg.

The Loon's wild cry is comparable to no other sound on earth. The dictionary derives its name from the Scandinavian "loom", but we suspect that it has acquired its name from the effect its call might have on some people.

The Goshawk according to Mr. Gromme in an article in the Milwaukee Journal "is far more ferocious than the Eagle. She is two and a half pounds of unadulterated fury. The Eagle is tame in comparison and I believe has been badly maligned both as an attacking bird and as a kidnaper. The Goshawk has unlimited aggressiveness." Mr. Gromme took pictures of both birds in northern Wisconsin this summer and is qualified to speak from experience. The Goshawk attacked him and inflicted permanent scars while he was endeavoring to photograph it.